

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

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FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7241

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY ACAIRO

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY SANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 2337

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, FT

SUB: OAU CONFERENCE ON FTAI OPENS IN ACCRA

1. OAU SPECIAL CONFERENCE ON FTAI OPENED IN ACCRA ON AFTERNOON 29 MARCH 77 WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL FTAI POLITICAL GROUPS REPORTEDLY PRESENT. PARLIAMENTARY LEADER BARAKAT WAS THERE AND WAS POINTED OUT TO EMBOFF WHO OBSERVED FUNCTION. MEMBERS OF OAU SPECIAL INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE ON DJIBOUTI ARE ALSO DELEGATES TO CONFERENCE, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO LAST THREE OR FOUR DAYS. FRENCH EMBASSY ASSISTED BY EXPERT FROM PARIS IS FOLLOWING CONFERENCE CLOSELY. ACCORDING TO REUTERS CORRESPONDENT ACCREDITED TO ADDIS, JEREMY TOYE, ETHIOPIAN MFA DIRECTOR FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS WAS ON PLANE FROM ADDIS TO ACCRA, AND PRESUMABLY

WILL BE ACTIVE AT CONFERENCE. NO ONE HAS YET SEEN REPRESENTATIVES FROM MOGADISCIO, BUT OBSERVERS SEEM TO EXPECT THEM.

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2. AFTER OPENING REMARKS BY SPECIAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR TO ADDIS SALAH BASSOUN2, GHANAIA FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER FELLI TOOK FLOOR TO DELIVER FAIRLY REALISTIC SPEECH ON NEED FOR UNITY AMONG THE FTAI FACTIONS. HE POINTED OUT ANGOLA AND ZIMBABWE AS UNFORTUNATE EXAMPLES OF WHERE LACK OF UNITY CAN LEAD THE FORCES OF AFRICAN LIBERATION. IN THIS CONTEXT FELLI ALSO GRATUITOUSLY THREW IN GHANA GOVERN-

MENT'S AIM TO INSTALL "UNION GOVERNMENT", AN UNDEFINED AND UNPOPULAR CONCEPT THAT SEEMS DESIGNED SOLELY TO PERPETUATE THE EXISTING REGIME. TURNING TO OUTSIDE INFLUENCES FELLI

CALLED ON "BIG POWERS" TO KEEP HANDS OFF DJIBOUTI AND STRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT NO FOREIGN TROOPS (PRESUMABLY INCLUDING FRENCH) SHOULD BE PRESENT AFTER INDEPENDENCE. FELLI WAS SUBSEQUENTLY NAMED AD HOC PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE AND INDICATED IN ACCEPTANCE SPEECH THAT HE WANTS TO PLAY AN ACTIVIST ROLE. EGYPTIAN EMBASSY CONTACT, HOWEVER, HAS TOLD EMBOFF THAT BASSOUNY PLANS TO MAINTAIN REAL LEADERSHIP.

3. BASSOUNY SPOKE AGAIN AFTER FELLI AND STATED SPECIAL COMMITTEE HAD DETERMINED THAT THE PEOPLE OF DJIBOUTI ALL WANT INDEPENDENCE AND THEIR LEADERSHIP ALL WANT TO MAINTAIN NATIONAL UNITY. HE ALSO STRESSED POTENTIAL DANGERS OF GREAT

POWER RIVALRY WHICH COULD ARISE FROM DISUNITY.

4. EGYPTIAN EMBOFF ALSO INDICATES THAT BASSOUNY IS OPTIMISTIC THAT CONFERENCE WILL BRING UNITY. ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE EGYPTIANS ARE MOSTLY CONCERNED ABOUT PROSPECTS OF GREAT POWER INTERFERENCE IN DJIBOUTI AFTER INDEPENDENCE.

WHILE SMALL FRENCH MILITARY ADVISOR GROUP IN DJIBOUTI WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO EGYPTIANS, LARGE GARRISON WOULD NOT. EGYPTIAN MAINTAINS THAT ALL THE FTAI GROUPS ARE EQUALLY OPPOSED TO HAVING LARGE FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE AFTER INDEPENDENCE. FRENCH EMBOFF CONFIDENTIAL

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STATED HE BELIEVES FRENCH GOVT ONLY INTENDS TO HAVE ADVISORY GROUP- NOT GARRISON- IN POST INDEPENDENCE DJIBOUTI. UNLIKE THE EGYPTIANS, HOWEVER, TOYE (WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE FOLLOWED THE FTAI ISSUE CLOSELY), FRENCH EMBOFFS AND SEVERAL OTHER OBSERVERS AT THE OPENING SESSION DID NOT SEEM VERY HOPEFUL CONFERENCE WILL BRING LASTING UNITY.

5. FRENCH EMBOFF EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT ETHIOPIANS WILL BE HARDPRESSED TO GET SUPPORT FROM OAU COMMITTEE MEMBERS BECAUSE OF HARASSMENT OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN ADDIS AS WELL AS POLITICAL FACTORS. TANZANIA, GUINEA AND PERHAPS UGANDA NAMED AS POSSIBLE, BUT NOT CERTAIN, TO SUPPORT ETHIOPIA. ON OTHER HAND, BASSOUNY'S POSITION WILL ENHANCE SOMALI CLAIMS WHICH EGYPTIANS TEND TO SUPPORT. IN ANY EVENT, FRENCH EMBOFF STATED INDEPENDENCE WILL GO AS SCHEDULED NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS IN ACCRA. SMITH

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